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## BED DELAY PATIENT DESTINATION POLICY (San Bernardino County High Desert Area Only)

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### PURPOSE

A responsibility of an EMS agency is to assure that emergency patients requesting emergency medical care through the 9-1-1 system receive assistance and transport as quickly as possible. This is accomplished in part by requiring response time standards for all 9-1-1 providers, public and private sectors. Bed delay is threatening timely responses to such calls in the High Desert.

ICEMA protocol currently allows 9-1-1 responders to consider patient request when such request will not take the ambulance out of the service area for an extended period of time and when the condition of the patient allows transport to other than the closest appropriate emergency department.

This policy is to ensure timely responses to 9-1-1 calls and sets forth destination policies for transport to St. Mary Medical Center, Victor Valley Community Hospital and Desert Valley Hospital when the 9-1-1 response system falls below a system status level that delays timely responses to 9-1-1 calls.

### AUTHORITY

Health & Safety Code, Division 2.5, Chapter 4, Local EMS Agency, Section 1797.220 and Chapter 5, Medical Control, Section 1798.

### DEFINITIONS

**Bed Delay:** Ambulance units are determined to be on bed delay if the patient has not been removed from the ambulance gurney within twenty-five (25) minutes of arrival at hospital as documented in the ePCR.

**High Desert:** Exclusive Operation Areas 12, 17, 25 and 16 (excluding area south of intersection Highway 138 and Highway 2 and Wrightwood).

**Deployed Ambulance Units:** The number of ambulances assigned to provide service within a specific geographic area. This may vary based on provider's deployment plan.

**System Status Level:** The number of **available** ambulance units in a specific geographic area.

## POLICY

1. When forty percent (40%), or higher, of deployed ambulance units in a specific High Desert area (excluding Barstow) are on bed delay with system status level four (4) or below, or committed to other 9-1-1 calls, as determined by the dispatch center, transport providers in the High Desert area shall follow the destination policy below:
  - a. Patients shall be transported to the hospital whose emergency department has the least number of ambulances on bed delay as determined by the agency's dispatch center.
  - b. Transporting agencies may not have patients sign "Against Medical Advice" (AMA) forms as a tool to supersede this destination policy. Patients that refuse transport to the suggested facility may sign the AMA form if they choose to self transport.
  - c. Transporting units are not required to honor patient requests when this emergency protocol is implemented.
  - d. When this emergency protocol is implemented, transporters shall note the following on the patient care record:

### **"EMERGENCY BED DELAY DESTINATION PROTOCOL"**

2. The following exceptions apply to the destination policy noted in No. 1:
  - a. Patient **meets trauma center destination criteria** ("*Trauma Triage Criteria and Destination*", Reference #15030).
  - b. Patient meets STEMI center destination criteria ("*Cardiovascular STEMI Receiving Centers*" policy, Reference #6070).
  - c. Base station direction to other facility.
  - d. Cardiac arrest or unstable patients will be transported to the closest receiving hospital regardless of bed delay.
3. When advised by dispatchers that No. 1 above is not applicable, patient requests may be honored in accordance with "*Patient Refusal of Care or Other Patient Request*", Reference #9100.

4. ICEMA will review all patient care records where destination is determined based on this policy. If a provider does not submit patient care records utilizing the ePCR, the provider must submit a copy of the patient care record to ICEMA within seventy-two (72) hours.